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INFO UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 032527

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA- TALKING POINTS FOR MARCH 31 ARRIA STYLE MEETING ON SOMALIA

1. This is an action message. See paragraph 2.

2. USUN is instructed to draw from the following talking points for the March 31 Arria style meeting on Somalia.

Begin points:

-- The United States would like to thank the UK Permanent Mission for organizing this Arria-style meeting. We would also like to thank all the NGOs and UN organizations that have participated today for their briefings on the humanitarian crisis in Somalia.

-- The United States is extremely concerned about this situation. In February 2008, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU) for Somalia reported that nearly 2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. This is an increase of nearly a million people over the prior year. There are an estimated one million internally displaced persons in Somalia with an additional 335,000 Somali refugees in neighboring countries of asylum. Clearly the situation in Somalia is beyond desperate and requires critical support from the international community.

-- For its part, the United States will continue to do all it can to help alleviate the suffering of the Somali people. In Fiscal Year 2007 and to date in FY 2008, the United States Government has provided more than \$143 million for emergency food assistance; health; nutrition; agriculture and food security; livelihoods; coordination; protection; water, sanitation and hygiene programs, as well as peacebuilding activities; refugee and victim of conflict assistance; and air operations. But this, of course, is more than just a figure to those receiving the support from groups like your's. Here are some of the programs we are supporting:

- In response to critical emergency health and protection needs due to fighting and displacement, the USG supports the International Committee of the Red Cross efforts to help shore up the struggling health care sector. The ICRC works through the Sudanese Red Crescent to provide basic health services at 25 clinics in central and southern Somalia, which serve over 260,000 people. The ICRC also provides surgical support teams and medical equipment at the Keysayney and Medina hospitals in Mogadishu.

- We also have provided this year \$1.2 million for: critical nutrition programs targeting conflict and drought-affected populations; nutrition monitoring, reporting, and information-sharing for improved coordination of response efforts.

- In response to water shortages and to combat cases of acute watery diarrhea, the United States Government is supporting Mercy Corps and UNICEF efforts to improve access

to safe drinking water and sanitation and hygiene facilities countrywide.

- The USG is assisting Mercy Corps to provide psycho-social support services and child-friendly spaces, and funding UNICEF's protection activities for conflict-affected populations.

- In Somalia the humanitarian crisis is inextricably linked to the political and security situation. Innocent civilians are often caught in the middle of violence, resulting in deaths, injuries, displaced populations, and disruption of commerce. The United States, therefore, agrees with the recommendation of the UN Strategic Assessment for Somalia that political, security, and programmatic efforts of the UN should be coordinated and well organized with the immediate goal to suspend the vicious cycle of violence, reprisals, and death that have characterized the past few decades in Somalia.

- The United States fully supports the efforts of the Somali Prime Minister Nur "Adde" Hassan Hussein and of the Special Representative of the Secretary General Ahmedou Ould Abdallah to reach out to talk to members of the opposition. As more members of the opposition lay down their arms and agree to work within a peaceful political process, civilian casualties will be reduced, people will return to their homes, commerce can be reestablished, children can go back to schools, and efforts on reconciliation and reconstruction can resume.

- The United States supports the relocation of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), as well as other essential members of the UN Country Team (UNCT) from Kenya to Somalia as soon as possible. While the situation does not currently allow for the relocation of UNPOS personnel, the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) should start the planning for the relocation of UNPOS to Somalia. The return of UNPOS and UNCT elements to Somalia will have a positive impact on the humanitarian situation in Somalia and help to reduce layers of bureaucracy that are impeding quick decision making and knowledge of on the ground activities.

- The deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia would also help the humanitarian situation in Somalia. The UN has produced four scenarios for greater UN involvement in Somalia's security. However, only one scenario would call for a UN PKO. While we understand the difficulties developing contingency planning for a PKO when security realities on the ground are so unstable and unpredictable, it is not realistic for the UN to wait for the "ideal" security conditions or until all or even a vast majority of the parties have agreed to a political power-sharing agreement to plan for a UN PKO. The people of Somalia can not wait any longer for the UN to take a leadership role in the security of Somalia.

- The United States will continue to call on the international community to do all it can to bolster AMISOM. For our part, we are providing over half of the funding for the operation. We commend the brave Ugandan and Burundian forces for their professional and dedicated efforts to bring peace and stability to Somalia. We call on all AU countries that have pledged forces to deploy as soon as possible. Additional support is necessary to maintain and expand the existing force in Mogadishu. We call on the international community to fund AMISOM fully so that the AU can expedite the deployment of additional forces and properly address the stability mission in Somalia.

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